

## Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Malta

Please cite as:	Cedefop (2020). <i>Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Malta</i> . CareersNet national records. <a href="https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices-malta">https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/country-reports/inventory-lifelong-guidance-systems-and-practices-malta</a>
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### Introduction

The **Ministry for Education and Employment** (MEDE) is responsible for the provision of career guidance in the education and employment sectors, including establishing national curricula and priorities. The **National School Support Services** (NSSS), Directorate for Educational Services (DES) is the national entity within the Ministry responsible for providing guidelines and objectives for career guidance in the compulsory education sector (up to age 16) and various post-secondary institutions (up to age 18), namely **Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School**, **GEM 16+** and **Sir Michelangelo. Refalo Sixth Form**. It is also responsible for the supply and the coordination of career guidance services, including the implementation of programmes aimed at achieving improved school-workplace coordination and assistance in the transition stages, including those from school to work. NSSS transfers responsibility of guidelines implementation to the individual state education institutions. Although there is an increased level of freedom in the implementation of guidance activities, they are carried out in accordance with the national curricula and national priorities.

MEDE has committed itself to strengthening the transitions within compulsory education, post-secondary education and/or work through closer collaboration with receiving entities: post-secondary institutions, and employers/employer representatives, amongst others. Such cooperation is indispensable as the education sector increases its efforts in ensuring that all students remain in the system, thus reducing school drop-out, and that students are prepared for the world of work and/or further education.

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Sir Michelangelo. Refalo Sixth Form <https://smarsf.skola.edu.mt/index.html>

### Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders

In Malta, there is no formal lifelong guidance forum, but opportunities exist for collaboration among stakeholders involved in the delivery of lifelong guidance. In addition to fostering collaboration among key stakeholders, the aim of such activities is to enhance the development of a lifelong guidance system, to support the professionalisation of career guidance practitioners and to promote successful career guidance practices. Collaboration exists between representatives, primarily acting within the **Ministry for Education and Employment** (MEDE), from:

- Euroguidance Malta**, NSSS, MEDE;
- the **National Schools Support Services**, Directorate for Educational Services, MEDE;
- the **Directorate for Learning and Assessment Programmes**, MEDE;
- the **Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability**, MEDE;
- the Directorate for Educational Services, MEDE;
- the **National Skills Council**, MEDE;
- representative bodies of workers and employers;
- Jobsplus** (formerly known as Employment and Training Corporation);
- post-secondary education institutions;
- the **University of Malta**;
- European Union Programmes Agency**:
  - National Commission for Further and Higher Education** (NCFHE);
- the **Malta Career Guidance Association** (MCGA);
- non-governmental organisations involved in the delivery of career guidance (Euroguidance, 2018).

In the employment sector, Jobsplus, Malta's Public Employment Service (PES) is the national entity responsible for the provision of career guidance. It establishes priorities, target groups and partnerships related to career guidance. The **Employment and Training Services Act**, (CAP. 594 of 2019) regulates several issues such as objectives and principles within public employment services as well as services provided and labour market activities. The interests of employers and employees are integrated within labour policies, since MEDE collaborates with their representatives for the drafting of labour policies.

Malta launched the National Skills Council (NSC) in December 2016 with the aim of bringing together the worlds of education and industry, creating better conditions and incentives for continued upskilling and addressing skills gaps and skills mismatches. Lifelong guidance priorities are supported in the work of the NSC. The Council was set up by means of **Subsidiary Legislation 327.547 of the Laws of Malta** and has set itself a three-year strategic plan.

During 2017, the NSC identified three priorities: work-based learning; digital skills; and research and development. For each priority, a sub-committee was established with a specific remit and timelines with clear deliverables. Each sub-committee includes the participation of stakeholders and social partners, as necessary, to stimulate wider consultation (Warrington & Hristov, 2018). The sub-committees make their resulting policy recommendations in their report on each set of priorities, presented at the NSC plenary meeting. The priorities set in 2018, include the important industry-education collaboration across all levels of the education system and across all education structures.

In respect of coordination and cooperation, the National Skills Council:

- taps into studies carried out by different entities to assess the skills shortages at national level and in particular sectors;
- encourages and facilitates educational institutions, building bridges with industry, to address skills gaps and skills mismatches;
- steers business-education encounters to facilitate the feedback to and from while at the same time seeks a slightly longer-term qualitative forecast by the key stakeholders in each sector;

- d. aims to review the past and present available skills within the labour workforce and recommend policy changes to minimise the skill gaps that exists in some sectors.

The **National School Support Services** (NSSS) within MEDE collaborates with national entities from the labour market to carry out ongoing training for career guidance practitioners. NSSS is also an active member in working groups for sectors including Engineering, Finance, ICT, Science, Health, and Tourism to secure placements for year-10 students who undergo a one-week career exposure experience (additional information can be found [here](#)) besides talks and orientation visits for students within the compulsory education sector. It collaborates with entities, such as the **Malta Career Guidance Association** (MCGA) and post-secondary and tertiary education institutions and other national entities in the organisation of career guidance events such as the annual National Euroguidance Conference. The aim is to bring forward the employability agenda and engage in links with industry. Such initiatives are intended for both students and career guidance practitioners.

The **Euroguidance Centre** (Malta) administered by NSSS, through the organisation and promotion of a number of activities held during the year, collaborates with local stakeholders involved in the provision of career guidance. The centre promotes the European dimension in guidance activities and provides information on mobility. Euroguidance ensures that, through its well-founded relationship with the main stakeholders and institutions, it reaches the objectives established by the Euroguidance Network. Accordingly, this collaboration with stakeholders enables the sharing of experiences established locally and encourages the introduction of practices undertaken by counterparts in other Member States. This exchange and promotion of practices provides a platform for lifelong guidance initiatives that, in turn, help to reduce early school leaving, reinforce vocational education and training, and support the validation of non-formal and informal learning (Euroguidance Malta).

An example of cooperation and coordination mechanisms in lifelong guidance, organised for the first time by the centre, is the stakeholders' forum held each year. This allows all providers of career guidance services within education institutions and industry in Malta and Gozo to meet and discuss developments and challenges being faced by the latter in relation to the links with industry. The plan is to hold such a forum on a regular basis.

MEDE also organises other initiatives related to career guidance which require the collaboration of representatives from both industry and education. Amongst them is the '**I choose fair**', targeting year 10 and year 11 students from all state, Church and independent schools. This is another opportunity for students to explore career options as they leave compulsory education. The aim is to enable students to make informed choices about their future and to facilitate their transition from compulsory education to post-secondary and/or work.

The **Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School**, **Sir Michelangelo Refalo Sixth Form**, the **Junior College**, **GEM 16+**, the **University of Malta**, the **Institute of Tourism Studies** and the **Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology** participate in the following career guidance initiatives related to cross-sector coordination and cooperation:

- regular meetings with guidance teachers and career guidance practitioners in compulsory and post-compulsory Education
- links with secondary and post-secondary schools to provide information sessions to students about courses on offer;
- participation in career fairs and talks when invited;
- participation in the '**I choose fair**', a national fair which brings together education institutions under one roof;
- participation in the stakeholder forum organised by Euroguidance Malta;
- collaboration with the Malta Career Guidance Association

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## Access to guidance

In Malta there is universal access to career information and career guidance. All national and foreign citizens are entitled to career support services according to national legislation [further information can be found in the **Education Act**, the **Employment and Training Services Act** (1990, 1996) and the **National Curriculum Framework for all** (2012). Specific regulations in the education and employment sectors define specialised services to different target groups and distinct levels of provision. The services are provided mainly by two established publicly funded systems.

#### Schools

Schools have the main responsibility for career and educational guidance. The **Ministry for Education and Employment** (MEDE), through the **National School Support Services** (NSSS), Directorate for Educational Services (DES) is responsible for the organisation of career guidance and counselling services in the state primary, middle, secondary education and Sixth Forms including **Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School**, **GEM 16+** and **Sir**

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**Michelangelo Refalo Sixth Form.** Compulsory education (up to age 16) as well as post-compulsory education general and VET programmes are provided by State schools, the Catholic Church and independent schools (Cedefop, 2017). NSSS is responsible for the State schools which include primary, secondary and Sixth Forms including Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School, GEM 16+ and Sir Michelangelo Refalo Sixth Form. The Education Act (Chap 327, 1988, 1991) ensures that students have access to vocational and career guidance services, including programmes aimed at achieving improved school-workplace coordination, and assist in the transition stages, including those from school to work.

The **Career guidance policy for schools** (2007) is the major career guidance framework for policy development in the field in Malta. It led to a formal division of career guidance from personal counselling (within the psycho social support services) in State colleges, which eventually reached all students within compulsory schooling (up to age 16), who gained access to career guidance by specialised career guidance practitioners (on a 40-hour basis). Added to the existing provision of guidance teachers who already provide their services to primary and secondary school students, this policy created a new infrastructure of career guidance practitioners.

The 2007 policy also led to an increased focus on the topic of careers within the PSD (Personal and Social Development) programme within schools, a subject that was eventually renamed **Personal, Social and Career Development** (PSCD). Since 2014, this change has ensured universal access to career education to all young people in compulsory schooling, including those at risk of early school leaving and students with disabilities. The dedicated teaching hours of career-related topics are nine hours in Years 3 to 6 and 32 hours for lower secondary.

Independent Schools in Malta follow their own programmes of student career guidance provision, although the 2007 Career guidance policy for schools was extended to compulsory-level church schools. The Directorate for Educational Services, Secretariat for Catholic Education, is responsible for the provision of career guidance services within Church schools in Malta and Gozo. A career advisor is employed to further strengthen access to career guidance for students within church schools.

The 2007 Career guidance policy for schools was also extended to State Sixth Forms (MQF 4). Within *Sixth Forms*, general higher education preparatory programmes following lower-secondary, students are provided with career guidance services, including individual and group career guidance, career fairs, talks by prospective employers and tertiary institution representatives.

Within vocational post-secondary institutions, career education is integrated into all vocational subjects and transition skills are developed in cooperation with local employment services as students are provided with work-based learning opportunities. All students have access to individual and group career guidance and opportunities to participate in career-related events, such as fairs and talks.

For State higher education, provided by the **University of Malta**, there is a legal framework providing students access to career guidance services, for prospective and current students, through the Student Advisory Services.

Primary and secondary school students have access to career guidance focused on improving their learning and supporting their career choices. Career guidance services are delivered in schools through a variety of face-to-face provisions, both on a one-to-one basis and in small and large groups. These interventions contribute to career development as well as personal and social development of students, within a holistic approach. This includes initiatives to support students' subject/career choices and transitions from primary to secondary education and from secondary to post-secondary education and/or work.

This provision is complemented by external resources with talks by employers, career orientation visits and one-week career exposure experiences for students at the place of work (additional information can be found [here](#)). All students are included in such programmes. Several State colleges organise tailor-made programmes to cater for the particular needs of students and to encourage them to engage in direct experiences relating to employment. Such programmes target possible early school leavers, low-achieving students and/or students with individual educational needs (IENs). Transition coordinators are also employed within the Ministry for Education and Employment to support students with individual educational needs (IENs) and their parents/careers in their transition from secondary to post-secondary education and/or work.

Complementing the career guidance services, within Maltese schools, learners are also taught career management skills (CMS) as part of personal, social and career development. All students from year 3 to year 11 undertake a number of hours every year throughout their compulsory education on the CMS acquisition (see section **Career management skills**).

Schools also work closely with **Jobsplus** to support learners' career planning and development, where employment advisors are invited to schools to talk to students or carry out workshops in relation to career exploration, employability skills, job-seeking skills, training opportunities, and how to register for work. Prospective early school leavers and other vulnerable learners also have the opportunity to visit Jobsplus in order to gain first-hand information on services which they may need to access after they finish compulsory education.

In post-secondary institutions, within sixth forms, students are provided with individual and group career guidance talks by prospective employers and tertiary institution representatives, besides career fairs. Within the **Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology** and the **Institute of Tourism Studies**, the main vocational post-secondary and tertiary institutions in Malta, career education is integrated into all vocational subjects; transition skills are developed in cooperation with local employment companies as students are provided with work-based learning opportunities such as apprenticeship, work placements, internships and job shadowing. All students also have access to individual and group career guidance and opportunities to participate in career-related events such as fairs and talks. Career guidance is also provided to prospective students and graduates both on one-to-one and group levels (see section **Guidance for VET participants**).

**Student Advisory Services** from the University of Malta provide access to quality career information for prospective students, university students and graduates. This service provides students with the necessary information and advice to make informed choices on issues related to career paths and courses of study within the local context. Other career-related initiatives are organised by individual faculties with the aim of bringing students closer to the world of employment. At the University of Malta there is also a counselling service which caters for students' personal needs (see section **Guidance for higher education students**).

All post-secondary institutions and the **Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability** host their own websites which provide information on the courses they offer, and other information related to the entity. The use of ICT in guidance tends to be restricted to the provision of information about further education opportunities. The National Schools Support Services also hosts a career blog, **Career Guidance Malta**, which provides basic information on activities organised by the entity plus an opportunity to contact the team for any queries. Colleges also host their websites and Facebook pages. Generally, all schools within the colleges host a section on career guidance but the main function is that of providing information on the type of services offered by the school concerned. Basic contact with students and parents through emails is also evidenced in all schools.

The National School Support Services through an Erasmus+ Project **Explore more**, developed an interactive website with the aim of addressing the information given to young people aged 11 to 16 about their future career choices. All the information needed for students to decide on what career path they will choose is available online. This information is accessible to students, parents and teachers. The Ministry for Education and Employment plans to continue funding and sustaining this web portal after the project ends in 2019 (see section **ICT in lifelong guidance**).

#### *Jobsplus/PES*

**Jobsplus** (Malta's national Public Employment Services) coordinates the employment policy actions for employed and unemployed individuals. Access for specific client groups is facilitated through the vast coordination and cooperation partnerships. Jobsplus is regulated by the **Employment and Training Services Act** (2019). The organisation includes a head office and several Job Centres in Malta and Gozo. The career services provided include: career advice, jobseeker profiling, the development of personalised action plans, the provision of exposure schemes, training services, job matching placements and access to quality information on the labour market (further information can be found [here](#)).

EU nationals and their family members, asylum seekers and migrants with a protection status, as well as third country nationals who are living and working in Malta can also access targeted Jobsplus guidance services.

A number of private recruitment agencies also operate in Malta, but their main function is that of matching the individual with employment opportunities. Employees have access to career guidance activities provided by trade union members without career guidance experience and background, and by experts from Jobsplus.

Jobsplus works with several organisations on a regular basis, namely:

- a. the **National Commission for Further and Higher Education** (NCFHE);
- b. the **Department of Industrial and Employment Relations** (DIER);
- c. the **National Commission for Persons with Disability** (KNPD);
- d. the **Lino Spiteri Foundation** (provides initial and continuous advisory assistance and job search support to persons with disabilities);
- e. the **Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology** (MCAST);
- f. the **Institute of Tourism Studies** (ITS);

- g. career training providers;
- h. IVET institutions;
- i. companies;
- j. **Malta Employers' Association** (MEA, identify labour skills shortages);
- k. **Caritas Malta** (provides specialised and personalised services to substance abusers to increase their employability with a view to enabling their entry into the labour market and retaining employment);
- l. the **Inspire Foundation Malta** (provides employment support, advice and guidance to Jobsplus senior job coaches);
- m. **Richmond Foundation** (provides employment support, advice and guidance to Jobsplus senior job coaches);
- n. OASI (provides specialised and personalised services to substance abusers to increase their employability with a view to enabling their entry into the labour market and retaining employment)
- o. a number of NGOs and entities working with migrants (provide support in identifying the needs of migrants and support in the development of the services).

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## Quality assurance

The **National School Support Services** (NSSS, MEDE) is responsible for the implementation, monitoring and quality of career guidance services within the compulsory education sector. It oversees coherence between policies, education and quality of professional training for its practitioners. The NSSS Directorate for Educational Services (DES) also works in close cooperation with the colleges, who provide feedback and advice regarding the delivery of career guidance. Implementation, monitoring and quality of career guidance provisions and practitioners within state Sixth Forms is also the responsibility of the NSSS as no formal quality assurance mechanisms are in place.

Within the education sector, each guidance practitioner is bound by work ethics governed by the *Respect for all framework* (2014a). Within both sectors, the standards in place are organisation-specific and linked to career progression routes within the entity.

Career guidance within education is carried out by two streams of practitioners: the recently developed professional profile of career advisors, along with guidance teachers. The former group consists of EO (Education Officers), who require an MQF level 7 Master qualification in lifelong career guidance or a comparable qualification, and Principal Education Support Practitioners and Senior Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors), who also require an MQF level 7 Post-Graduate Diploma qualification.

Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors) require an MQF level 6 qualification in a social science related subject, including but not limited to Lifelong Career Guidance, Human Resources, Sociology, Social Studies, Psychology, Youth Work and Social Policy. Career advisors are responsible for the coordination of career guidance within individual colleges.

The work of career advisors is complemented by that of guidance teachers, who are qualified teachers and who besides their guidance work, they are subject teachers too. They also carry out personal and career guidance interventions. Evaluation meetings are organised with guidance teachers and career advisors in order to assess performance and establish areas of improvement. Quality standards at college level (MQF 3) are monitored by the Education Officers (Career Guidance). These standards are the result of collective agreements drawn up by the representing union and the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) (2015, 2017).

The [Malta Career Guidance Association](#), a national association representing career guidance practitioners, was established in 2009. The Association has focused on strengthening the skills of career guidance practitioners through the provision of training in collaboration with the [University of Malta](#) and the National School Support Services (NSSS), MEDE. Further work is being done to professionalise the service by creating professional standards and a code of ethics.

No organisation is in charge of examining the quality of guidance-related occupational and educational information, which is published by a variety of entities, before it reaches the users.

Employment Advisors posted at [Jobsplus](#) (Malta's national Public Employment Services) are required to have an MQF level 6 in a social science related subject, including but not limited to Lifelong Career Guidance, Human Resources, Sociology, Social Studies, Psychology, Geography, Management and Social Work. Newly recruited employment advisors are required to undergo an extensive induction programme. Jobsplus also carries out continuous quality checks on the profiling and guidance given to jobseekers by all of its advisors. For new recruits, these quality checks are intensified.

In respect to State colleges, career guidance provision is monitored by the Education Officers (EOs) (career guidance) through one-to-one/group sessions organised on a regular basis with the Principal Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors), the Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors) and Guidance Teachers. During these sessions feedback is provided in relation to the career guidance programmes delivered to students in compulsory education and Sate Sixth Forms. Guidelines regarding initiatives such as the one-week career exposure experiences (additional information can be found [here](#)) and other initiatives are also discussed and outlined. Information sessions through national guidance meetings held regularly throughout the academic year are also organised by the EOs to ensure that the same standards are kept by the different colleges, particularly in relation to national initiatives such as the option choices exercises, the career exposure experience, orientation visits to workplaces and post-secondary institutions.

In the context of quality standards for CMS for school pupils up through secondary education (see sections [Career management skills](#) and [Guidance for school pupils](#)), a draft policy outlining guidelines on the procedures of the one-week career exposure experience, among other related activities, is currently (2019) awaiting publication. This policy will further strengthen the teaching of CMS by ensuring that schools follow the correct standards, aims and objectives of this experience.

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University of Malta. <https://www.um.edu.mt/>

## Career management skills

Although there is no formal national strategy on lifelong guidance for the development of CMS in Malta, the development of career management skills, the access to career guidance information, learning, training and employment opportunities is the result of collaboration between various actors, such as authorities and agencies, associations, and providers:

- a. the [National School Support Services](#) (NSSS), Directorate for Educational Services (DES);
- b. the [Malta Career Guidance Association](#);
- c. [Jobsplus/PES](#);
- d. the [European Union Programmes Agency](#);
- e. the [Malta Financial Services Authority](#) (MFSA);
- f. the [Malta/Gozo Tourism Authority](#);
- g. the [Malta Information Technology Agency](#) (MITA);
- h. the [eSkills Malta Foundation](#);
- i. the [Chamber of Commerce/Gozo Business Chamber](#);
- j. the [Malta Employers' Association](#);
- k. Government Ministries;
- l. post-secondary and tertiary Institutions (particularly the [University of Malta](#));
- m. private career guidance providers.

The overall aims of CMS development in all stages of education refer to:

- a. provision of opportunities for the development of employability and personal development skills needed in the labour market;
- b. increase of opportunities for links with the world of work;
- c. encouragement for more active participation of employers in all stages of education;
- d. support in increasing participation in lifelong learning, while reducing early school leaving.

The public employment service, Jobsplus (see sections [Access to guidance](#), [Guidance for the employed](#), [Guidance for unemployed adults](#)), coordinates employment policy actions for employed and unemployed individuals, for adults with special needs and otherwise at risk of exclusion. The career services provided include: job matching, job placements, access to quality information on the labour market, jobseeker profiling, career advice, the development of personalised action plans and training services. Jobsplus is also working closely with the National School Support Services (NSSS), Directorate for Educational Services (DES) by providing training to career guidance personnel and guidance teachers in public schools to keep them updated on the latest labour market trends and Jobsplus services. It also provides sessions in secondary and post-secondary schools to strengthen students' career management skills (see sections [Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders](#), [Access to guidance](#)).

#### Schools

[Jobsplus](#) has increased its school-to-work interventions in many educational settings, mainly secondary and post-secondary schools. These school-to-work integration programmes include, but are not limited to, the following topics/sessions:

- a. overview of Jobsplus and services offered by the Jobseekers' Advisory Services;
- b. career planning and development (choosing a career);
- c. self-assessment;
- d. career exploration through the application of a career test;
- e. narrowing down your options;
- f. decision making and goal setting;

- g. I want to work!
- h. CV Writing;
- i. job search;
- j. Jobsplus online matching system;
- k. applying for a job;
- l. preparing for an interview;
  - elevator pitch;
  - mock interviewing;
- m. employment - what happens after I start working?
- n. information for first time employees;
- o. engagement and termination forms;
- p. what to expect and work ethics.

This collaboration is not limited to public schools, but the service has been extended to church and independently run schools.

**Personal, social and career development programme (PSCD)** is a career management skills programme which aims to improve the emotional, communication, and social skills of students from third grade to eleventh grade. The module Career planning and exploration directly tackles topics like planning one's studies, dealing with change, transitions, the rights and duties of workers, and different pathways beyond school. These topics also help students understand the need to explore areas of interest and to identify training and education possibilities that are related to their skills and abilities.

In order to develop students' career management skills further, schools also implement career guidance programmes for primary and secondary students. The aim of the guidance is to provide access to career information, to develop the career management skills and to facilitate the school transition and the transition between the school and the labour market. This programme includes job shadowing activities, career orientation visits, talks by employers, career fairs, visits to post-secondary education institutions, and one-to-one career guidance sessions, besides alternative learning programmes for disengaged and vulnerable students who are possible early school leavers from education.

Job shadowing activities (or career exposure experiences as known in Malta - additional information can be found [here](#)) in financial, health, tourism and IT companies (amongst others) are established in Maltese state schools. The development of job shadowing is the result of collaboration between schools, companies, and the National Schools Support Services from the Directorate for Educational Services. The aims are to increase the awareness of different career paths, to encourage students to explore different careers, to increase their study motivation, and to develop their career management skills. Students learn how to write a CV, a letter of motivation, a job application and how to make a good impression during a job interview.

Entrepreneurship opportunities through different schemes offered by NGOs help CMS development. Students get involved in coordinating the activity of different cooperatives. Through the activities, students develop their employability skills and collaborate with business mentors. They learn about working rights and regulations, economy-related issues, social benefits, vacancies, financial incentives, and work ethics.

The **Alternative Learning Programme (ALP)** is an educational programme which includes the teaching of vocational subjects. It is implemented in the final year of compulsory schooling with the aim of preventing school drop-out among at-risk students from within the educational system. The programme includes theoretical and practical activities and aims to improve students' soft skills through career seminars, workshops, visits and trainings.

In addition, all sixth forms and VET post-secondary institutions (see section [Access to guidance](#)) organise career-related initiatives such as career fairs, information talks by employers and representatives from further and higher education institutions, opportunities for one-to-one and group career guidance sessions, CV writing and interview skills sessions, career visits and/or placements.

#### Universities

Students are helped to develop their career management skills by participating in various initiatives and services:

- a. students can take part in extracurricular programmes which are awarded credit such as the Degree+ programme, which provides students with opportunities to become aware of the importance of mastering a number of soft skills;
- b. the development of CMS is embedded in some of the modules taught in the different courses on offer;
- c. the Student Advisory Services provide prospective and current students at the University of Malta with the necessary information and advice in order to make informed career choices;
- d. students have opportunities to participate in work placements and internships initiatives;
- e. opportunities for direct contact with employers during career fairs, talks, seminars, etc. organised by the different faculties (see section [Guidance for higher education students](#)).

#### VET post-secondary institutions

The Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) [Career guidance policy](#) (2011) provides guidelines for the provision of career guidance to students. Through career guidance, students are helped to develop the skills of decision learning, opportunity awareness, transition learning, self-awareness and self-confidence. This developmental programme is also supported by the syllabi at all levels to increase students' job-seeking and employability skills. Entrepreneurship, individual social responsibility and critical thinking are among the essential key CMS taught in the different courses.

The [Institute of Tourism Studies](#) also offers opportunities for students to develop the following skills:

- a. interviewing skills;
- b. organisational skills;
- c. time management skills;
- d. study skills;
- e. assignment writing.

Students participate in local practice and international internships. These work placements are important in preparing young people for their transition to employment and bridging the gap between schooling and the world of work. Students are also offered support when dealing with the change of role from that of a student to that of an employee. Similarly, the development of CMS is embedded in the modules taught in the different courses on offer.

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## Evidence, monitoring and assessment

Gathering evidence about career guidance activities and developing monitoring studies is a shared responsibility between the following stakeholders:

- National Statistics Office (research about Labour Market and Education);
- Ministry of Education and Employment (MEDE) (education statistics, early school leaving monitoring studies);
- Jobsplus/PES (statistics about the employment sectors);
- National Commission for Further and Higher Education (statistics about further and higher education);
- University of Malta (Graduate tracer studies);
- national entities representing employment sectors (including statistics about the tourism, health, engineering, education, ICT sectors) (Euroguidance, 2018).

Cooperation between Malta's PES (Jobsplus) and the other entities at national level ensures that the results of labour market research in Malta, including key statistics collected, are disseminated by Jobsplus to education and employment practitioners.

Within the compulsory State education sector (students up to age 16) the National School Support Services (NSSS), Directorate for Educational Services (DES), Ministry of Education and Employment (MEDE), is the entity responsible for gathering evidence about career guidance activities. This is done through the Education Officers (EO), who are responsible for monitoring career guidance within the state colleges. There are two Education Officers who conduct this work. Education officers meet regularly with career advisors and trainees (at least once a month) to evaluate and gather feedback about career guidance programmes and initiatives.

Data is gathered from end-users in order to identify the impact on their self-awareness and self-reflections. National events are evaluated, and information collected and processed by EOs; college- based activities are evaluated and processed by the respective college.

It is general practice within schools that career guidance activities are evaluated at the end of each activity by getting feedback from students, parents and others, such as practitioners and employers/speakers involved in the activity. Interviews and questionnaires are used to gather regular student feedback on their progress, the career services used, and on what worked/did not work. Student evaluations are central to the career exposure experience (one-week job shadowing for year 10 students, aged 14-15, additional information can be found [here](#)), where each student completes a reflective journal. The journal contains reflections on the learning experience and feedback about the quality of the workplace provisions offered. The career guidance teams within state schools are requested to send a yearly report outlining the career guidance interventions undertaken in individual and group settings in the colleges. These reports outline the target group, the types of intervention and the number of students reached.

The National School Support Services within the Ministry for Education and Employment also conducts the Tracer study. This is an annual compilation of statistical data about the choices Maltese students make after completing compulsory education, in relation to their post-education or work path. The study is conducted through a joint collaboration between state, church and independent secondary schools in Malta and Gozo and the National School Support Services (NSSS) within the Directorate for Educational Services. This study helps to formulate a national picture identifying national, sectoral and school trends. The tracer studies identify the following trends:

- respondents' career choices (further education, work or other options);
- percentage of respondents' choices of post-secondary path/career choice by state, church and independent schools;
- percentage of respondents' choices of post-secondary path/career choice by gender;
- respondents' educational choices by gender (academic versus vocational education and training);
- occupation choices by gender (the type of jobs both females and males are opting for);
- reasons given by respondents for choosing to work, by gender;
- factors which have influenced respondents' decisions to start working;
- other choices which have influenced participants' decisions not to continue either in education or in employment, by gender;
- number of respondents with individual educational needs post-secondary/career choice, by gender;
- one year after students drop out, schools have access to information about early school leavers through the tracer study

Studies on early school leavers are conducted by the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability, Ministry for Education and Employment, which published the [Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020](#) (see section [Guidance for early leavers](#)). Schools have access to information about early school leavers, from one year after they have dropped out of school.

In post-secondary and tertiary institutions, similar evaluation and monitoring exercises are conducted with the aim of getting feedback from end users about the career service used, and what was effective/not effective.

Several policy documents and strategies outline evaluation processes and recommendations for career guidance provision.

- The [National vocational education and training policy](#) (2015) highlights the need for career education information sessions across secondary and further education providers, individual sessions with the unemployed, women returners to the labour market, and other initiatives to promote the VET route.
- The [Further and higher education strategy for Malta 2020](#) (2009, p. 37) acknowledges that guidance services play a pivotal role in motivating students to pursue further education studies prior to entering the world of work. In this regard, The National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) made recommendations in its *Skills for the future* report for more professional guidance services, using evidence-based research and providing information that is structured, reliable and timely. NCFHE also urges future tracer studies to explore the reasons for students opting out of further education to inform future policy developments in this area.
- The [Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020](#) suggests 'the development of the current guidance system into a comprehensive educational counselling and career guidance system implemented by multi-professional teams (teachers, school psychologists, external experts) in all state and private schools from year 6 onwards, and with binding regulations concerning scope and structure of courses.' (2014, p. 26).

### Tertiary Education

The National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE) conducted the [Graduate tracer study](#), undertaken in 2015-16. It aimed to identify the situation of graduates after they completed their qualification to evaluate the impact of further and higher education in Malta. The study also addressed the fit between the education provided and the needs of the labour market. This may help to increase the relevance and responsiveness of further and higher education to labour market needs and to the needs of the diverse student population.

Indirectly related to career guidance, the NCFHE has been conducting research focusing on the enrolment of 16- to 19-year-olds in education, and the subsequent lifelong learning journey, as reflected in their 2008-15 statistics on further and higher education. In 2015, 79% of the total population aged 17 in Malta were enrolled in further and higher education (full-time and part-time) while 21% were not registered in any of the reporting institutions. Participation in the former group is increasing,

The **Employability index** (2015d) is one of the measures aiming to support the transition from further and higher education to employment. The intended benefits of the Employability index were highlighted in Malta's National reform programme published in 2015: '*The Employability index will offer more guidance to students on the choices of jobs that are available for the various lines of studies by indicating to the student the potential of finding a job within the line of study being chosen.*' (2015d, p. 6). According to the programme, this study aims at identifying students that may be at high risk of experiencing underemployment due to a mismatch between their educational attainment and their occupation, based on the premise that a graduate will aim to find employment which matches his or her area of study and attainment level. Employers also support research developments which support effective allocation of education expenditure and channel human resources, accordingly.

Table 1. presents an overview summary related to career guidance practices within the education and employment sectors (where available).

Practice	Accessed/yearly	Number and types of guidance interventions	Number of guidance practitioners within the respective entity
Personal, social and career development programme (PSCD)	All year 4, 5, 6 primary school students and year 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 students in State, church and independent schools	Class-based interventions	Personal, social and career teachers teach CMS in state schools: 145 teachers in secondary and 37 teachers in primary
Job shadowing in state schools	All Year 10 students during 2017-18: 2,189 students	One-week career exposure experiences	140 guidance teachers, 6 career guidance teachers, 11 principal education support practitioners, 9 education support practitioners within state colleges, 2 education officers (career guidance)
I Choose Post Secondary Education Fair	1793 students attended the fair during 2017-18	Not available	Not available
Career Orientation visits in state schools	2017-18: Year 9 students: 1,832 2017-18: Year 10 students: 255 2017-18: Year 11 students: 1,099	Visits at the places of work or post-secondary institutions	Not available
State schools	All Primary and Secondary School Students have access to guidance.	One-to-one, class based and group guidance sessions, visits and talks	140 guidance teachers, 6 career guidance teachers, 11 principal education support practitioners, 9 education support practitioners, 2 education officers (career guidance)
Sixth forms	All students attending Sixth Forms can participate	Talks, career fairs, group and one-to-one sessions	Not available
VET institutions	All students attending VET institutions can participate	Career fairs, one-to-one, group sessions, talks and orientation visits	4 career advisors
University of Malta	All students attending the University of Malta can participate	Career fairs, one-to-one sessions, career fairs and talks	4 career advisors
Alternative learning programme	233 students during 2017-18	One-to-one, class based and group guidance sessions; 6 weeks career exposure, visits & talks	3 guidance teachers, 1 career guidance teacher
Malta Career Guidance Association	Not available	Conferences and training events	105 members
Centre for Labour Studies	Not available	Master in lifelong guidance & career development	No career guidance practitioner employed
Stakeholders' forum	Approx. 60	Working breakfast/meetings	In 2017, 20 heads of organisations coming from the education sector. In 2018, 40 heads of organisations from industry
Joint career trainings by Euroguidance/MCGA	Approx. 250 on a yearly basis	Various training sessions	Practitioners from education and employment
Jobsplus	All unemployed registering jobseekers, asylum seekers, migrants with a protection status and other job changers (including also TCNs)	One-to-one and group sessions, seminars, career tests, mock interviews, training sessions (courses, 12 week exposure schemes, traineeships), job coaching, talks, workshops, career fairs, online job search and matching facilities, provision of information to other professionals working within the field.	Approx. 40 employment advisors

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## Career information, ICT in guidance

In the education sector, the importance of strengthening career guidance services through the use of ICT has been acknowledged since 2007 in the report [Career guidance policy for schools](#) (2007). The [Malta National lifelong learning strategy 2020](#) (2014) also highlights the importance of setting up a portal to curate information on courses of interest to adult learners.

The emphasis on ICT has also resulted in the Government providing a laptop to all career guidance practitioners (guidance teachers and career advisors) with internet facilities at school and college level, and the provision of tablets to all year-4 students (in primary schools) to enhance early ICT skills and learning engagement through ICT-based lessons.

The establishment of a National Career Service is currently (2018-19) in focus. The Career Guidance Section, [National School Support Services](#) (NSSS), is collaborating on an Erasmus + project entitled [Explore More](#), with a local NGO, [Prisms](#), active in non-formal education. Portugal and Greece are country partners in this project, the aim of which is to develop a national one-stop-shop interactive web portal with career information for young people aged 11 to 16. The web portal includes a series entitled *A day in the life of*, comprising short videos depicting a typical day of different professionals, together with information on the courses linked to each career profile. A simple aptitude test is also available to students choosing their career path. The website was launched in October 2018.

Across the different stages of the education sector, the use of ICT in guidance tends to be restricted to the provision of information about further education. All post-secondary, further education institutions and the [Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability](#) host their own websites (see section [Access to guidance](#)). The latter provides information on the courses they offer as well as application forms, national lifelong learning and ESL strategy documents and other information related to the entity.

The [eSkills Malta Foundation](#) has an important role to play in sustaining ICT integration in lifelong guidance. It brings together representatives from the [Malta Information Technology Agency](#), the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#), the [Malta Enterprise](#), [Malta Gaming Authority](#), the [Malta Communications Authority](#) and the [Chamber of Commerce](#). It was set up by the Government in February 2014. The general aim of the Foundation is the expansion and sustainable growth of ICT skills in Malta.

According to its website, the Foundation was set up to:

- a. advise Government and stakeholders on matters related to eSkills policy;
- b. contribute to the expansion of ICT educational programmes and related formative initiatives;
- c. lead an ICT professional development programme;
- d. instigate further reform in the ICT educational offerings;
- e. contribute to capacity-building in the ICT education community.

Indirectly, these developments serve as government investments in ICT in improving and delivering lifelong guidance services as well, inasmuch as career guidance is high on the government's agenda and eSkills Malta Foundation facilitates related initiatives and events.

The eSkills Malta Foundation undertakes ICT career guidance for all individuals. It collaborates with the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE) so that various sessions are offered to career advisors, guidance teachers, and secondary school students. Every year an ICT career guidance programme is devised with MEDE depending on current needs, and advancement in ICT and digital skills. The Foundation also offers ICT career advice to other stakeholders, including but not limited to, the [University of Malta](#), [Malta College of Arts and Technology](#) (MCAST), private schools, [Jobsplus](#), industry and others who are interested. As a policy in the context of continuous changes in digital skills and roles for ICT and related social transformation, the foundation emphasises that both students and workers should seek regular advice to further their career.

The eSkills Foundation contributed to the identification of ICT roles required by the ICT industry and the industries using ICT, as well as the ICT skills, competences and attitudes needed. Yet to be solved is the wider and more proactive use of ICT career advice in the private sector and a wider reach of ICT career advice through online interactive tools.

Within the public employment service, Jobsplus employment advisors use an IT Interview tool that organises data collected from jobseekers, referred to as profiling, which in recent years has been expanded in order to include different skill sets (determined following consultation with employers) and a new section on competences. Both the skills and competences are taken into consideration for job matching purposes.

The profiling section dedicated to competences allows employment advisors to discuss with jobseekers the competences related directly to certain occupations, past employment experiences, hobbies and qualifications. It also allows them to search for competences by occupation and/or direct keywords in order to add them to a person's profile. In the new section of the profiling system there is a list of nearly 10,000 competences. A number of these have been linked to specific occupations to which they are relevant; the rest are generic and can be applicable to several occupations. Different skills sets include basic skills like literacy, numeracy, IT literacy and money management; work skills, like working under pressure and time management; and personal skills, like written and verbal communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem-solving and decision management, working in teams and work ethics.

Jobsplus launched a new [website](#) in 2016 where jobseekers can register for an account, which is linked to the jobseekers' profile. The user can manage the profile and carry out matches with potential job vacancies. Similarly, employers who have a company profile may use the online matching engine to search for potential employees directly through the website. Other IT tools, such as career tests, are also used, while Jobsplus has developed a web-based registration [tool](#).

In the last quarter of 2016 the 'fingerprint registration system' was deactivated and a new system launched. Although face-to-face meetings between employment advisors and jobseekers are mandatory, follow-ups are no longer limited to face-to-face interactions. Instead, a series of blended services have been adopted; for instance, in the case of IT literate job seekers, e-follow-ups can take place through ICT channels such as e-mail, telephone calls,

and online job application monitoring. Personalised action plan agreements between employment advisors and jobseekers have also been formalised and updated.

Jobsplus recognises that technology is a key driver of the structural changes which affect working and social life. This is especially so for digitalisation, which, together with globalisation and demographic change, is expected to affect all workers in one way or another. To this effect, more focus both at EU and national levels are given to ICT, as they are generating new business opportunities and many occupations are changing their content and skills requirements.

At national level, the Jobseekers Advisory Unit within Jobsplus works closely with schools by offering services and information sessions to students prior to finishing compulsory education. Jobsplus also offers a number of ICT-related courses for individuals who want to acquire or upgrade their digital skills. Since Jobsplus' rebranding in 2016, more importance was placed on ICT. The branding strategy aimed to position Jobsplus as an innovative and dynamic organisation that excels in meeting the labour market needs of employers, jobseekers and employees. The launching of Jobsplus' revamped website offers an array of services. As Jobsplus is committed to provide labour market information, including legislative frameworks, guidelines, research publications, statistical data and policy documents, a dedicated section entitled 'resources' was included in the website.

The Jobseekers section of the website offers information regarding guidance services, schemes, training opportunities and vacancies which are part of the Jobsplus commitment to offer guidance to both jobseekers and individuals who are in employment but seeking alternative or additional opportunities. Jobsplus also offers advice on matching candidates with job openings, provides information and opportunities for upskilling their workforce and employment subsidies. This information is available under the employers' section. Jobsplus allows for individuals to report abuses related to irregular employment by the place of work anonymously through its website. The DIER, on the other hand, are responsible for abuse issues related to regular employment. To meet today's technological demands and to facilitate the matching process, the Jobsplus website includes a job matching system for those who register through the website. With such registration, the user will have access to the online job vacancy matching system and will be able to access her or his profile dashboard, CV builder and matched vacancies.

Within compulsory education, the National Schools Support Services (NSSS) hosts the [Explore More](#) project, an ICT-based web portal, converting all the information related to career and post-secondary education into an online system. All the information needed for students to decide on what career path they will choose is available online and on an app; this information is accessible to students, parents/guardians and teachers alike. The information is presented in an interactive way so that students are not only informed, but they can also interact with material presented in form of an online game. Students are engaged and enabled through the information given to them. The web portal also includes interactive information and includes a series of *A day in the life of*; this is a short video with a typical day of different professionals such as doctors, nurses, youth workers, engineers, architects, website designers, gaming and electricians, with first-hand testimony from the people who work in the relevant industry. The Ministry for Education and Employment will continue funding and sustaining this web portal once the project ends in 2019.

NSSS also hosts a career blog, [Career Guidance Malta](#), which provides some basic information on activities it organises. It offers the opportunity to contact the team for any queries. NSSS also keeps a career room (a webpage) which includes information related to the experiences offered to students. This is an internal working space for practitioners to access documentation such as employer-college agreement forms, college-parental agreement forms, details about placements offered to students and other documentation which is generally required for such work-place experiences and visits.

Colleges also host their websites and Facebook pages. Generally, all schools within the colleges host a section on career guidance, but the main function is that of providing information on the type of services offered by the school concerned. Basic contact with students and parents through emails is also evidenced.

Strengthening the ICT sector in guidance promotes stronger links with employers, while providing students with an ICT career exposure experience week (additional information can be found [here](#)), helps to give students real-world knowledge of how the ICT sector works. Run by the eSkills Malta Foundation, the ICT career exposure experience week targets students aged between 14 and 15, offering them a taste of what it would be like to be part of the ICT sector and helping transform Malta's ICT Industry. Career orientation visits are also provided to 13-year-old students.

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## Training and qualifications

An emphasis on training and keeping up to date with labour market information and developments in the career guidance sector, is a requirement for all practitioners working within the career guidance field.

Career guidance within education is carried out by two streams of practitioners: the professional profile of career advisors and guidance teachers. The former group consists of EO (Education Officers), who require a master's level 7 qualification in Career Guidance or a comparable qualification together with work experience, and Principal Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors) who require an MQF level 7 qualification in career guidance or a comparable qualification, together with work experience.

Senior education support practitioners (Career Advisors) also require an MQF level 7 qualification in career guidance or a comparable qualification. Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors) also require a level 6 qualification in a social science related subject such as Career Guidance, Human Resources, Sociology, Social Studies, Psychology and Social Policy. Career advisors are responsible for the coordination of career guidance within

individual colleges (Euroguidance, 2018). Their work is complemented by that of guidance teachers who carry out personal and career guidance intervention, as well as having a teaching load as they are qualified teachers. They are not required to have a qualification in career guidance.

For **Jobsplus**, an employment advisor must possess an MQF level 6 qualification in a social science related subject such as Lifelong Career Guidance, Human Resources, Sociology, Social Studies, Psychology, Geography, Management and Social Work. Newly recruited employment advisors are then required to undergo an extensive induction programme (Euroguidance, 2018).

Jobsplus provides mandatory specialised training to its staff, including continuous training in ICT and LMI themes. The competences required by employment advisors at Malta's PES have changed over the years with developments in ICT, as well as having to adapt to the needs of specific groups such as migrants and refugees, long-term unemployed and people with disabilities, requiring continuous training for employment advisors and guidance practitioners.

The in-service training of career guidance practitioners within compulsory state schools is regulated by the **National School Support Services**. It organises training in collaboration with national entities in hospitality/tourism, health, education, ICT, science and health care, engineering and transport. Career guidance practitioners within the state education sector are required to attend a number of training events during each scholastic year (Euroguidance, 2018).

Career guidance practitioners are also encouraged to become members of the **Malta Career Guidance Association (MCGA)**. Each year it organises training events for its members and, in collaboration with **Euroguidance Centre Malta** (see section **Coordination and collaboration among stakeholders**), it organises the Euroguidance National Conference, various publications and other training events. Career guidance practitioners within the education and employment sectors attend these training events. MCGA is working towards the professionalisation of career guidance in the country and works in collaboration with other national entities to strengthen the competences of the career guidance practitioners.

The role of **Euroguidance Malta** is important in assisting collaboration with national entities to strengthen the competences of guidance practitioners, such as informing them about European initiatives in LLG and supporting international mobility for career practitioners. Euroguidance Malta keeps up-to-date with European initiatives in guidance through contact with the EU Commission, Cedefop and other international organisations, so it can inform career guidance practitioners within the education and employment sectors of such developments. It also funds and organises continuous professional development initiatives to strengthen the competences of career guidance practitioners within the education and employment sectors.

A three-year part-time evening MA programme in Career Guidance and Development has been organised by the **University of Malta**. Participants should have a first cycle degree with at least Category II in an area of study deemed relevant by the Board of Studies. The admission process includes an interview and the initial screening of the previous studies and professional experience. The curriculum includes the following modules:

- a. sociology of work;
- b. helping skills for career guidance practitioners;
- c. research methods;
- d. placement in career guidance settings;
- e. labour market;
- f. guidance theories;
- g. models and strategies;
- h. professional development;
- i. dealing with particular groups;
- j. career guidance policy developments across Europe;
- k. career guidance tools;
- l. career guidance management;
- m. career management and lifelong learning;
- n. labour law and economics;
- o. group skills;
- p. career information systems;
- q. the workplace;
- r. issues relating to specific sectors.

Entrepreneurship-focused training and events for school guidance teachers and career guidance practitioners have been developed with entities such as the **JAYE Young Enterprise (Malta) Foundation** and the **Edward de Bono Institute for the Design and Development of Thinking**, University of Malta.

During 2017-18 and 2018-19 the **Institute for Education**, through Euroguidance funds, organised an MQF level 7 (3 ECTS) in understanding of career guidance and development. This course aimed to instil knowledge, skills and competences in educators who wish to become more professionally involved in career guidance and educational.

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## Career guidance for school pupils

Aiming to diminish the early school leaving rate, the National School Support Services within the Directorate for Educational Services implements career guidance programmes for primary and secondary students. The aim is to provide students with access to career information, to develop career management skills and to facilitate the school transition and the transition between school and the labour market.

A **2014 policy shift** (see section **Access to guidance**) involving the updating of the subject **Personal, Social and Career Development (PSCD)**, resulted in the inclusion of career development in compulsory-level schools (up to age 16). Career management skills are subject-based and integrated into the curriculum, which is the result of the implementation of the **Career guidance policy for schools** (2007).

All students are entitled to individual and group guidance, career orientation visits, one-week career exposure experiences at the place of work (additional information can be found [here](#)), career fairs and talks, career portfolio/profiling exercises, and programmes for choosing subject options. Students are entitled to transition exercises from kindergarten to year 1; year 6 to year 7, year 8 to year 9 and year 11 to post-secondary education and/or work. During all initiatives and/or transition phases, parents/guardians are involved in the process. Scheduled career-related topics in student timetables per year in the subject Personal, Social and Career Development are: 9 hours during the primary years (year 3 to year 6) and 32 hours in the secondary years (year 7 to 11) including 'senior secondary' and lower secondary education, which are divided as shown in table 2:

Year	Number of hours
3	2
4	2
5	2
6	3
7	6
8	6
9	5
10	6
11	9

The **Personal, Social and Career Development** (PSCD) subject complements career guidance provision and aims to improve the emotional, communication, and social skills of students. The module career planning and exploration introduces various topics: planning for life after school, dealing with change, transitions, the rights and duties of workers, and different pathways beyond school and which relate to their interests, possible training needs and their skills and abilities.

One-to-one sessions engage students in discussing their future career choices and their O-level/SEC results. Other activities include career orientation visits to different workplaces where students are all given the opportunity according to their subject options and their interest, career talks by employer representatives and post-secondary institutions, as well as CV writing and sessions on interview skills.

Career portfolio exercises generally start from senior schooling (year 9) and continue through the school years. They are supported by a career guidance practitioner. The aim of this initiative is to encourage students to reflect on their skills, what they want to do in the future, and how they can achieve this from an early age, as students may find it challenging to make a connection between the career learning they are exposed to and the knowledge they are building about themselves, their abilities and interests. In year 11 students participate in an individual session designed to assist with the development of a career plan. There are option choice exercises where students are helped to choose their subject options for years 9 and 12.

Post-secondary education fairs are organised at college level and also on a national level, while other tailor-made programmes are organised by individual colleges taking student needs into account. Church and independent schools also provide career guidance to school students through one-to-one and group guidance sessions, talks, and information sessions on post-secondary courses in order to help in the transition from secondary to post-secondary education.

CEEs (career exposure experience, additional information can be found [here](#)) within the financial, health, tourism, engineering, beauty and hairdressing, architecture, law and IT sectors/industries and others consist of a job-shadowing experience for year 10 students. The development of CEE is the result of collaboration between schools, organisations, and the **National School Support Services** (NSSS); it aims to increase student awareness of career pathways, to explore different careers, to increase their study motivation and to develop their career management skills. Students learn how to write a CV, a letter of motivation, a job application and how to participate effectively during job interviews. CEEs help to reinforce the learning of transversal and entrepreneurial skills, and to reduce the distance between the educational environment and the workplace.

National School Support Services (NSSS) has worked on establishing the guiding principles and a regulatory framework for the one-week career exposure experience. It provides a logistical framework for all secondary schools in Malta and Gozo intending to organise career exposure experiences, particularly to year 10 students. A draft policy outlining guidelines on the procedures of the career exposure experience is currently (2019) awaiting launching. This policy will further strengthen the teaching of CMS by ensuring that schools follow the correct standards, aims and objectives of this experience.

A recent secondary-school reform implemented in 2019, **My Journey**, aims to increase the teaching of vocational and applied subjects. It strengthens the integration of CMS teaching within the curriculum while increasing links with the labour market through work-based learning.

The **Alternative Learning Programme** (ALP) aims to prevent school drop-out among students from the final year of compulsory school who clearly demonstrate that they will not attain the desired qualifications and who are at high risk of becoming early school leavers. The programme includes theoretical and practical activities and aims to enhance students' soft skills through career seminars, workshops, workplace visits and training.

At-risk students from state and non-state secondary schools can access an ALP focused on developing language and digital skills and increasing the access to work-based learning opportunities. These students are identified by career guidance practitioners who guide students in relation to programme's choice and prepare them for transition to the new school. The programme comprises a range of vocational pathways and student support services. A centre in Paola (2019) consists of 22 workshops/labs covering engineering, plumbing, auto mechanics, hospitality and multimedia studies; it offers hospitality equipment, as well as salons for personal care and beauty studies. Guidance teachers provide career guidance services to the students. The programme has a strong vocational component and students are encouraged to continue with their education or training in a full-time higher education institution or in other lifelong learning institutions on a part-time basis. In 2016/17, the government launched the Alternative learning programme plus (ALP+), which enables students to continue their learning experience at a post-secondary level, while receiving a monthly grant (European Commission, 2017).

**Jobsplus** (Maltese PES) is also working closely with the National School Support Services within the Directorate for Educational Services by providing training to career guidance personnel and guidance teachers in public schools and updating them on the latest labour market trends and Jobsplus services. Jobsplus increased its school-to-work interventions in many education settings, mainly secondary and post-secondary schools, further supporting the preparation of students for further education and/or work.

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Inventory of lifelong guidance systems and practices - Malta

## Guidance for VET participants

The Directorate for Educational Services provides career guidance programmes for primary and secondary students, including VET participants. The aim of guidance is to provide access to career information, to develop career management skills and to ease the school transition and the transition between school and the labour market. This programme includes job shadowing activities and Alternative Learning Programme (see Guidance for school pupils).

Career guidance in state schools is offered by Principal Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors), Education Support Practitioners (Career Advisors) and Guidance Teachers. The service covers curricular, vocational and career guidance for students and their parents/guardians. It is provided particularly (but not only) during transition periods when students choose their option subjects at year 8 and also at year 11. These practitioners work in close collaboration with VET institutions on opportunities for further studies and employment in the different vocational sectors, in order to guide students accordingly. Students also participate in career fairs and information activities organised by VET institutions.

The career guidance programme related to IVET (initial vocational education and training) includes:

- job shadowing ('career exposure experiences', additional information can be found [here](#)) for 14-year-olds who take part in one-week transition programmes involving observational experience in industry (including tourism, ICT, health, engineering, arts, finance);
- career orientation workplace visits;
- orientation visits to VET Institutions;
- talks by employees who inform students on options related to vocational routes;
- career and post-secondary institution fairs.

Post-secondary institutions have no formal strategy for the teaching of career management skills; however, all institutions organise career related initiatives such as career fairs, information talks by employers and representatives from further and higher education institutions, opportunities for one-to-one and group career guidance sessions, CV writing and interview skills sessions, career visits and/or placements. Within VET institutions at this level, the development of CMS is embedded in diverse course modules (see section [Career management skills](#)).

Career-related learning is also provided through the subject [Personal, Social and Career Development](#) (PSCD). Since 2014, career education has become more important. PSCD embraces the national curriculum framework principles of entitlement to quality education, recognition of diversity and achievement. It helps learners develop learning skills, emotional literacy, self-confidence, self-worth and self-esteem to equip them with the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes needed to live healthy, safe, productive and responsible lives. The PSCD strand on career exploration and management aims at helping learners manage their learning and career paths beyond school (Cedefop, 2017).

Non-state schools also provide career guidance to their students at different points of transition.

At-risk students from state and non-state secondary schools can access an [Alternative learning programme](#) (ALP) focused on developing language and digital skills, and increasing access to work-based learning opportunities. These students are identified by the career guidance practitioners who guide students in relation to programme's choice and prepare them for the transition to the new school. The programme comprises a range of vocational pathways and student support services. A centre in Paola (2019) consists of 22 workshops/labs covering engineering, plumbing, auto mechanics, hospitality and multimedia studies; it offers hospitality equipment, as well as salons for personal care and beauty studies. Guidance teachers provide career guidance services to the students. The programme has a strong vocational component and students are encouraged to continue with their education or training in a full-time higher education institution or in other lifelong learning institutions on a part-time basis. In 2016/17, the government launched the Alternative learning programme plus (ALP+), which enables students to continue their learning experience at a post-secondary level, while receiving a monthly grant (European Commission, 2017).

In relation to VET providers, career guidance is provided by the Students' Services Departments at the [Malta College of Art, Science and Technology](#), the [Institute of Tourism Studies](#) (ITS) and the [Youth.Inc](#) to students and prospective students include one-to-one guidance sessions to support the latter in choosing the right course and the appropriate career path. Students are also given support in their work-placements and during their studies. This service is offered free of charge on both an individual and/or group basis to both current and prospective students. These VET institutes offer orientation visits on campus to all secondary and post-secondary schools. The visit includes a talk, campus tour and, in the case of ITS, lunch is offered at one of the ITS' teaching restaurant.

[Jobsplus](#) guidance services (PES, Malta) encourage jobseekers (including the employed) to develop their skills further through training and/or work experience in line with labour market needs. Services include career information, advice, skills assessment and mentoring. With the new registration system (2016), Jobsplus has placed more emphasis on career guidance and individualised its services through jobseeker profiling, career advice, the development of individual action plans and training services. Support for individuals searching for alternative employment includes discussion on suitable career paths and a career test to personalise career plans and identify gaps in training and/or skills development that need to be addressed prior to pursuing the chosen path (Cedefop, 2017). Within institutions offering lifelong learning opportunities, it is most often the institution offering the VET course which provides information and support to interested individuals (see sections [Guidance for the employed](#) and [Guidance for unemployed adults](#)).

Please see the description of VET system in Malta [here](#).

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## Guidance for higher education students

The [University of Malta](#) supports young people and adults in the transition to employment and helps them to develop the skills to manage their career development over time. There is, however, no specific policy in place for career guidance or career management skills.

Students are helped to develop their career management skills through participating in the following initiatives:

- a. students can take part in extracurricular programmes which are awarded credit such as the Degree+ programme which provides students with opportunities to become aware of the importance of mastering a number of soft skills;
- b. the development of CMS is embedded in some of the modules taught in the different courses on offer;
- c. the Student Advisory Services provides prospective and current students at the University of Malta with the necessary information and advice in order to make informed career choices;
- d. students have opportunities to participate in work placements and internship initiatives;
- e. opportunities for direct contact with employers during career fairs, talks, seminars, etc. organised by the different faculties.

Various scholarship schemes are available for higher education students Some of them are presented below.

The [Get Qualified](#) scheme (2017-2020) is an initiative that supports the personal development of individuals to achieve qualifications and certifications required by industry. The incentive is applicable to individuals following a course of studies leading to a certification, diploma, degree or post-graduate degree courses. Upon successful completion the student will benefit from a tax credit enabling them to recover part of the costs incurred. Students following courses approved by the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) are granted tax credits on the following costs: fees paid by the individual to the university, institution or other entity recognised by the Ministry of Education and Employment for training and educational services leading to the approved qualification and fees for sitting examinations to achieve the approved qualification (Ministry for Education and Employment, n.d.).

The [ENDEAVOUR Scholarship Scheme](#) aims to support good quality tertiary education and to ensure that the Maltese labour market is supplied with the right individuals and to guarantee that it is in a better position to compete at an international level. The scheme aims to support those pursuing this path to succeed both at the level of education attainment as well as contributing effectively towards the economy. The scheme may be part-financed by the European Union Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2014-20.

Key Objectives of the ENDEAVOUR scholarship scheme are to:

- a. assist people to pursue further levels of academic research;
- b. improve the quality and relevance of the education system;
- c. reduce skills mismatches, particularly within the priority economic sectors;
- d. support further research in science and technology;
- e. increase the capacity and level of research, innovation and development activity in Malta (Ministry for Education and Employment, n.d.).

Other scholarships are also available from time to time:

- a. [Malta scholarship for doctoral programme](#) (European University Institute, Fiesole, Firenze);
- b. [The Malta arts scholarships](#);
- c. [The Tertiary education scholarship scheme](#) (TESS);
- d. [Malta financial sector scholarship scheme](#);
- e. [Malta sports scholarship scheme](#);
- f. [Reach high post-doctoral grants](#).

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## Guidance for adult learners

The [Malta National Lifelong Learning Strategy 2020](#) (2014) is the framework which supports the development of career guidance activities for adult learners (refer to Programme 23, p. 65). It states that people must be provided with the information and guidance they need to make effective learning decisions and transitions. The Strategy supports the concept of guidance and counselling to become a lifelong learning service: it should not be confined to school age and not be 'remedial' in its approach but serve a proactive purpose throughout a person's lifespan (ibid.). It proposes guidance initiatives as an integrated component of the education framework. It proposes an overall qualitative and quantitative system that helps young people and adults make the right choices, find the right offers and design a lifelong project for themselves. The [Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability](#) within the Ministry of Education and Employment is the main government entity providing adult learning courses in Malta.

The recently revamped [Employment and Training Services Act](#) (2019) is the legal framework which supports the development of career guidance activities for adults. Jobsplus, Malta's public employment service (PES) seeks 'to assist persons seeking employment by guidance and advice on the choice of employment and retraining (p. 8).

State and private post-secondary and tertiary institutions also provide career guidance to adult learners. The provision and practice of career guidance for adult learners is generally regulated by in-house policies. The latter is generally focused on educational guidance relating to courses which the institution offers.

The Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability within the Ministry of Education and Employment organises over 400 courses in around 100 subjects, including literacy and basic skills courses. During the intake period, the directorate provides guidance services aimed at assisting prospective learners.

Jobsplus offers retraining for the unemployed inactive and employed. It provides career guidance to clients through the Jobsplus Guidance Services Unit. Employment advisors use an IT Interview tool referred to as profiling when they meet jobseekers. In recent years there has been a change in the data collected as part of the jobseeker's profile. The content was expanded in order to include different skill sets (these were determined following consultation with employers) and a new section on competences. Both the skills and competences are taken into consideration for job matching purposes.

The profiling section dedicated to competences allows employment advisors to discuss with jobseekers, competences related directly to certain occupations. It also allows them to search for competences by occupation and/or direct keywords in order to add the relevant ones to a person's profile. In the new section of the profiling system there is an extensive list of nearly 10,000 competences. Several of these have been directly linked to specific occupations to which they are relevant; the rest are generic competences which can be applicable to several occupations.

Different skills sets include basic skills (literacy, numeracy, IT literacy and money management), work skills (working under pressure and time management), and personal skills (written and verbal communication skills, interpersonal skills, problem solving and decision management skills, working in teams and work ethics).

A personalised action plan agreement is signed by the jobseeker and his/her employment advisor. This agreement explains what happens once someone begins an action plan, and also highlights the obligations of the jobseeker (including quotas they have to reach within stipulated timeframes) and what they can expect from the employment advisor.

An adult jobseeker may also be referred to training opportunities which may include short courses, traineeships or work exposure.

Apart from offering guidance to registered unemployed jobseekers, Jobsplus had further expanded its guidance services to those changing jobs and any other adults of working age who are interested in making use of this service (see sections on Jobsplus in [Guidance for the employed, unemployed adults, NEET, immigrants](#)).

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## Guidance for the employed

Jobsplus' (Malta public employment service) strategic plan (2016-18) includes several objectives and measures, to improve services for jobseekers/job-changers (see sections on Jobsplus in [Guidance for the employed, unemployed adults, NEET, immigrants](#)). A key challenge for Jobsplus, according to the service, is to assist people in their transitions: from education to employment, from unemployment to employment, from inactivity to employment, and from one employment to another. These measures listed in the plan include the following:

- a. Measure 3.1: undertake legal amendments to create one register for jobseekers instead of the current Parts 1 and 2;
- b. Measure 3.2: registration will immediately trigger referral to an employment opportunity or activation measure;
- c. Measure 3.3: reach out to those seeking employment but not being registered unemployed and with youth NEETs;
- d. Measure 3.4: launch the online competence-based job matching system on the website;
- e. Measure 3.5: activate all registered young people within the framework of the Youth guarantee;
- f. Measure 3.6: activate the long-term unemployed within the framework of the Council recommendation on the integration of the long-term unemployed into the labour market through the Work programme initiative;
- g. Measure 3.7: develop job profiles and respective competences to facilitate career advice and progression; and
- h. Measure 3.8: propose new and innovative employment initiatives/schemes.

Jobsplus coordinates the employment policy actions for employed and unemployed individuals. The career services provided include job matching, job placements, access to quality information on the labour market, and career advice.

In 2017, Jobsplus formalised and expanded services offered to employed jobseekers interested in seeking alternative employment. A number of employment advisors (EAs) have been reassigned to reach out to those who were registering for an alternative job opportunity and provide assistance. The service includes updating of the jobseekers' profile through the checking of personal details, licences/warrants, updating employment records, inputting of new qualifications and updating others already in the system, listing job preferences and skills and competences. The employment advisor also recommends the use of the Jobsplus website with clients. This helps promote self-efficacy and induce career self-management. It includes assisting clients in registering as website users and make use of the online facilities. Advisors must also inform clients on the use of online resources and tools featuring in the Jobsplus web profile. These follow-ups are done face-to-face, by email and/or telephone. In addition to carrying out the necessary checking for required documents and vetting of profiles, the EA also offers the client the possibility to setup a one-on-one meeting by appointment. If the client is unable to do so due to work commitments, then the EA can provide guidance and follow-up with the client electronically and advise on labour market needs and requirements and relevant training, help the client apply to any vacancies available, assist in writing a covering letter and CV, undergo a career test or mock interview and any other interventions deemed necessary by the EA to aid smooth transition into an alternative career or employment.

#### National Employment Policy (2014d)

The aim of the [National Employment Policy](#) is to bring to light frictions that impede the labour market from functioning to its full potential. Such frictions have negative repercussions on the rate of growth of an economy. However, the economic perspective is only one part of the equation (ibid., p.10), as social aspects of employment are also considered. The policy document also addresses labour market participation of people with disability. Measures including cooperatives, supported employment and sheltered employment provide a safe environment where persons with disability can contribute to society.

#### The Gender Equality Action Plan (2007)

The Gender Equality Action Plan provides a detailed outline of strategic gender equality objectives that have been identified as necessary in meeting both broad and distinctive duties. The document sets out the Corporation's [revised gender equality scheme for 2009-10](#) and also includes an update on progress made over the past two years since the last Gender equality action plan was published in 2007. Progress has been made in a number of valid areas over recent years. As a result of this positive feedback, according to Jobsplus, the service continues to engage its clients, staff and stakeholders in all development phases of the action plan.

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## Guidance for unemployed adults

**Jobsplus** offers specific guidance services through its employment advisors to those who are unemployed and registering as such. Registering as unemployed brings with it a number of obligations, since jobseekers can be eligible for unemployment assistance. In order to reach those who are reluctant to register, Jobsplus also offers *ad hoc* guidance services to unemployed adults who, for one reason or another, prefer not to be registered as unemployed (see sections on Jobsplus in [Guidance for the employed, unemployed adults, NEET, immigrants](#)).

A number of schemes are in place for unemployed adults.

### *Traineeship scheme*

The **Traineeship scheme** is intended to provide jobseekers with initial vocational training (pre-employment training) that will help individuals obtain the knowledge, skills and competence required to find and retain employment. The scheme is available to both registered unemployed persons and inactive job seekers and its aim is to facilitate the transition into employment by helping participants obtain the knowledge skills and competences required to find and retain employment. Traineeships are based on the dual system of vocational training, providing a combination of on-the-job and off-the-job training. The programmes offered are labour market driven, whereby the job preferences of the jobseekers are matched with the requests made by employers participating in the scheme (Jobsplus, n.d.). A traineeship lasts 300 hours within a maximum period of 12 weeks, consisting of 282 hours as on-the-job training and 18 hours as off-the-job training. The maximum number of placement hours in any given week is 40 hours. The theoretical tuition is delivered by Jobsplus at its training complex while the on-the-job training takes place at the employer's premises with whom the trainee is placed. The classroom training programme is recognised by the **National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE)** and pegged at respective level with the Malta qualifications framework (MQF). Participants are paid a training allowance, payable by Jobsplus for every hour attended, which is calculated on the national minimum wage. The Traineeship Scheme forms part of the Training for Employment project, which is jointly financed by the European Social Fund 2014-20.

### *Work exposure scheme*

The **Work exposure scheme**, available to both registered unemployed persons and inactive job seekers is intended to facilitate transition into employment by providing jobseekers with initial hands-on training that will help individuals obtain the knowledge, skills and competences required to find and retain employment. This scheme is designed to mirror contemporary labour market demand, whereby the job preferences of the jobseekers are matched with employers' requests (Jobsplus, n.d.). The duration of the work exposure is of 240 hours within a maximum of 12 weeks and a participant is to report to the place of work for a maximum of 40 hours/week. The on-the-job training takes place at the employer's premises with whom the trainee is placed. Participants are paid a training allowance, payable by Jobsplus for every hour attended, which is calculated on the national minimum wage. The Work exposure scheme forms part of the *Training for Employment* project, which is jointly financed by the European Social Fund 2014-20.

### *Work placement scheme*

The **Work placement scheme** is aimed at providing training to participants following a course offered by Jobsplus, which includes a practical component:

- vocational education and training award in childcare (0 to 3 years old);
- vocational education and training award for care workers for persons with disability;
- vocational education and training award for care workers for the elderly.

The Work placement scheme gives Jobsplus trainees the opportunity to acquire both theoretical and practical training. The duration of the scheme is a maximum of 26 weeks, on an average of 30 hours/week. The on-the-job training takes place at the employer's premises with whom the trainee is placed. The hours trainees have to perform is set by Jobsplus, although trainees are allowed a degree of attendance flexibility ranging from 20 hours to 40 hours per week (Jobsplus, n.d.). The classroom training programmes are recognised by the NCFHE and pegged at respective levels with the Malta qualifications framework (MQF). Participants are paid a training allowance, payable by Jobsplus for every hour attended, which is calculated on the national minimum wage. The Work placement scheme forms part of the *Training for employment* project, which is jointly financed by the European Social Fund 2014-20.

### *Training pays scheme*

The **Training pays scheme**, forms part of the ESF.01.001 *Training for employment* project and aims to assist individuals to develop and/or improve their skills by participating in further off-the-job education and training. The scheme offers assistance in the form of a training grant to help participants with costs relating to training. This grant is awarded to the individual (trainee) after successful completion of their training. The scheme is open to applicants of working age population 16 to 64 years as per applicable law (Jobsplus, n.d). In fact, the target of the scheme is to increase the number of adults participating in lifelong learning. Individuals participating in the scheme will be refunded 75 per cent of the direct training cost (excluding VAT) up to a maximum of €1,000 when attending a training programme which is not offered by Jobsplus, with the intent of improving their level of competence or acquiring new skills. The training programme followed needs to be pegged between MQF Level 1 to 5. The training provider needs to be accredited and licensed by the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE). In the case of those aged between 16 and 24, they must not be participating under the Youth guarantee NEET activation scheme II.

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## Guidance for early leavers

The **Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE)** has joint responsibility for studies related to monitoring of early school leavers. Studies are conducted by the Directorate for Research, Innovation and Lifelong Learning, which recently published the **Malta National lifelong learning strategy 2020** (2014) (see section [Evidence, monitoring and assessment](#)). Strategies for strengthening and consolidating career guidance services at all levels, which can empower students most at risk of dropping out of school (p.28), are addressed in the document *A strategic plan for the prevention of early school leaving in Malta* (MEDE, 2014), available (2018) on the website of the **Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability**. According to Eurostat (2019), in 2017 the Malta early leaving rate was 18.6% of the population aged 18-24 years.

The *Strategic Plan for the Prevention of Early School Leaving in Malta (MEDE, 2014)* recommends guiding policies as a response in terms of a whole school approach. Since its formation, the Early School Leaving Unit (ESLU) has always worked with relevant stakeholders within and outside MEDE in order to solidify a comprehensive framework for the collection of data related to ESL as to extend pertinent policy making and implementation. The unit carries out continuous monitoring of strategies, policies and programmes with particular emphasis on education provision for children and youth at risk while analysing their performance based on empirical evidence.

The **Directorate for Learning Assessment Programmes** embarked on a large number of initiatives targeted at gifted and talented students in primary and secondary education, in order to enrich their educational experience, to promote STEM subjects and careers among this cohort of students, and to prevent disengagement from school.

From the school year 2015/16, all Maltese secondary schools have been offering some of the following vocational SEC (exams) subjects in year 9: Agribusiness, Engineering Technology, Health and Social Care, Hospitality and Information Technology. With the *My journey* education reform, from 2019/20 more subjects - Hairdressing and Beauty, Retail, Textiles and Fashion and Media Literacy - are being offered through applied and vocational routes.

See section [Guidance for NEET](#).

The [National School Support Services](#), through the recruitment of psychosocial professionals, including practitioners qualified in career guidance, ensures that vulnerable students in state schools receive multi-professional and timely support.

The [Foundation for Social Welfare Services](#) operates the [Youth in Focus](#) programme and the Adolescent day programme in order to assist vulnerable adolescents in reaching their potential through a personalised social work approach.

In line with the implementation of the [National Youth Policy 2015-20](#), [Aġenzija Żgħażaġh](#) works to enhance the personal and social interests of young people. Training and support for young people is provided in several youth cafes and youth hubs through various projects that aim to reinforce their skills and competences.

Students with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties follow specific programmes in nurture classes set up in state primary schools and learning zones in secondary schools. Learning support centres offer intensive programmes to SEBD (social, emotional, behavioural difficulties) students outside the school premises. An education hub was opened on September 2015 to address students with challenging emotional and behavioural difficulties (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2014e).

At-risk students from state and non-state secondary schools can access an [Alternative Learning Programme](#) (ALP) focused on developing language and digital skills, and increasing the access to work-based learning opportunities. These students are identified by career guidance practitioners who help in choice of programme and prepare students for the transition to the new school. The programme is aimed at students who are reaching the end of compulsory schooling but who clearly demonstrate that they will not attain the desired qualifications and who are at high risk of becoming early school leavers. The programme comprises a range of vocational pathways and student support services. A centre in Paola consists of 22 workshops/labs covering engineering, plumbing, auto mechanics, hospitality and multimedia studies; it offers hospitality equipment, as well as salons for personal care and beauty studies. Guidance teachers provide career guidance services to the students. The programme has a strong vocational component and students are encouraged to continue with their education or training in a full-time higher education institution or part-time in other lifelong learning institutions. In 2016/17 the government launched the Alternative learning programme plus (ALP+) which enables students to continue their learning experience at a post-secondary level, while receiving a monthly grant (European Commission, 2017).

As well as the ALP programme, resource centres aimed at students at risk of dropping out prematurely, many middle and secondary schools have been developing in-house programmes for students with difficulties in following mainstream educational pathways.

The [Prince's Trust XL programme](#), which has been introduced in schools in Malta, has been successful in helping young people re-engage by developing a sense of achievement. Prince's Trust XL works towards the [MQF](#) level 3 qualification in personal development and employability skills. The curriculum has been designed to complement existing academic programmes and helps to promote whole school learning.

Within post-secondary institutions a number of programmes are offered to students who would have left compulsory schooling without the necessary qualifications. The [Institute of Tourism Studies](#) offers a foundation programme in hospitality and tourism for students intending to follow further education and training in the hospitality sector. For students who leave compulsory school without formal qualifications but who would like to have another opportunity to take up an academic route, [Guze' Ellul Mercer 16+](#) was set up in September 2015 (Ministry for Education and Employment, 2014e). Its curriculum, composed of a limited number of academic subjects, prepares students to resit the SEC exams. The [Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology](#) also offers programmes at MQF level 1.

[Aġenzija Żgħażaġh Youth.Inc](#) programme is a full-time youth work-based learning experience aimed specifically at young people who have completed compulsory education without the basic qualification. The Foundation for Social Welfare Services runs the [Embark for Life](#) programme for vulnerable young people, aiming to help them in re-engaging with education and in preparing themselves for employment.

The adult education centres within the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Innovation offer part-time courses that range from MQF1 to MQF4 for young people and adults, both in morning and in the evening classes.

[Jobsplus](#) works hand-in-hand with the educational career guidance team to carry out interventions with potential early school leavers. Such interventions are generally *ad hoc*. Jobsplus also organises career guidance activities for young people registered as unemployed (see sections on Jobsplus in [Guidance for the employed](#), [unemployed adults](#), [NEET](#), [immigrants](#)).

See sections [Career guidance for school pupils](#) and [Career management skills](#).

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## Guidance for NEET

The [National youth employment strategy](#) aims to serve as a holistic framework for the successful integration of young people into employment through the provision of adequate support and help with education attainment. It falls under the responsibility of the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#).

The Strategy's objectives are:

- a. reducing absenteeism in compulsory education;
- b. increasing the participation rate of young people in further and higher education;
- c. increasing the participation rate in lifelong learning; reducing the early-school-leavers rate;
- d. increasing educational attainment at different levels of the education system;
- e. increasing participation in non-formal activities;
- f. reducing young people's unemployment rate;
- g. reducing the NEET rate; increasing apprenticeships and traineeships; and
- h. reducing the incidence of precarious and informal work.

[Jobsplus](#) (PES, Malta) administers the [Youth Guarantee](#) Scheme, an EU-funded project for young people aged 15-24. Unemployed registered youths with Jobsplus are assigned an employment advisor. Post-profiling, Jobsplus, would refer these youths to a Youth Guarantee initiative which corresponds to their needs. The referral would depend on a number of factors. These include whether the person in question was of working age and whether the individual had a level of adequate education or beyond, whether the individual requires professional assistance such as psychologists or medical attention, youth workers or support workers prior to engaging in a job experience such as work exposure or traineeship. The project also includes the services of two job coaches whose main role is to support and coach particular trainees with the aim of allowing them to successfully complete their work placement and more importantly when there is the possibility for them to be employed. On the other hand, the trainee under the responsibility of a job coach aims to get the necessary training and support required for them to understand and practice the tasks and sequences necessary for the work they are allocated. Job coaches also help participants integrate within the company and identify their line of command while offering encouragement, feedback and referrals to additional professional services such as that of the psychologist.

The Ministry for Education and Employment in collaboration with Jobsplus, concurrently conducted a NEET census to ensure that Youth guarantee initiatives are tailor-made to the needs of young people. Jobsplus is now actively engaged in assisting both job seeking and inactive youth.

In 2015, a Legal Notice was issued ([LN19/2015](#)) giving the authority to Jobsplus to follow up on young people participating in the Youth guarantee, with the aim of ensuring sustainability of initiatives and further intervention where needed.

The Youth Guarantee Scheme is based on preventive and assistive measures where each opportunity is designed to help young people continue their education or increase their chances of finding satisfaction and success in the labour market. The scheme consists of four education and employment related initiatives:

- **NEET Activation Scheme II** provides youths not in education, employment or training with personal and professional training, mentoring and constant support to facilitate their transition from education to gainful employment, while consequently improving their employment prospects, quality of life and social integration. The programme consists of two main phases: training and work exposure or further education. In the first phase, every applicant receives around 80 hours of basic training on soft skills while during phase two, the participant is offered either a work placement of a maximum of 240 hours with an employer based on his/her skills and desires, or the possibility to follow an educational course from an accredited institution such as MCAST. Upon completion of the work exposure phase, participants enter phase three which consists of a traineeship whereby participants will be able to put into practice what they have learnt during the previous two phases.
- **SEC Preventive Classes** is offered to students who fail the May sitting of their SEC examination in the core subjects (English, Maltese, Mathematics, Biology or Physics). They are offered five weeks of free preventive classes in a choice of up to three subjects, in preparation for the September re-sit.
- **MCAST preventive classes** are offered in a variety of key skills and vocational subjects during the summer period in preparation for the final assessments in September for MCAST students who fail one of the exams through Level 1, 2, or 3.
- **ICT Summer Courses** provide an additional educational opportunity to acquire new and valuable ICT skills and knowledge, through ECDL and a practical level 2 course. Participants are awarded with an allowance, provided they meet attendance requirements (Ministry for Education and Employment, n.d.)

Jobsplus has recently made an agreement with schools in respect to notification from those where early intervention may be needed to enrol potential early school leavers in the Youth guarantee activation scheme. In addition, targeted initiative specific newsletters are sent out to a database including educators, school psychosocial teams and senior management schools staff. These newsletters are in turn uploaded to the schools' internal platform and disseminated to parents and students alike in order to reach out to potential NEETs. NEETs are also sent a personal invitation which encourages them to engage in the Youth Guarantee Programme. Furthermore, a team of youth and social workers are tasked with carrying out door-to-door visits to maximise outreach potential. Additionally, social media campaigns across the YG Facebook and Twitter pages, newspaper and YouTube channels and radio advertisements are used in conjunction with the invitations to increase visibility and participation

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## Guidance for young people at risk

See section [Guidance for NEET](#).

## Guidance for persons with disabilities

Students in secondary schools are offered the same career guidance services as those in mainstream education. Additional services can be accessed in secondary school to support special needs and disabled students with the transition from education and employment. Transition coordinators are employed by the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) with the aim of supporting these students in the transition from secondary to post-secondary education or employment.

[Jobsplus](#) offers specific services to unemployed vulnerable clients and those with disabilities through the [Inclusive Employment Services Division](#) and the [Lino Spiteri Foundation](#) (LSF).

The Inclusive Employment Services team of employment advisors assists vulnerable jobseekers in their job search on a one-to-one basis. During their meetings with EAs (employment advisors) clients are referred to training, work exposure schemes and work opportunities. The team also works in close collaboration with other specialised organizations which, in turn, offer counselling and additional related services. Specialised programmes with NGOs are offered to vulnerable clients in order to enhance their employability. Such programmes support the individual's entry into the labour market by offering training, social work and psychotherapy services.

Various outreach activities for clients are carried out by employment advisors. These include individual assessment, career exploration, skills identification and referrals to work exposure schemes.

LSF specifically deals with unemployed persons with disabilities on a one-to-one basis, providing initial and continuous advisory assistance and job search support. The profiling and guidance executives provide career guidance and refer persons with disabilities to training opportunities, suitable job opportunities, programmes and work exposure schemes. Job coaching is also provided according to the individual/group during supported employment, open employment and schemes/programmes.

[Jobsplus](#) is responsible for the Register of persons with disability, as per [LN 156/1995](#). A person needs to apply formally to be included in this register by completing the respective application form, attaching a recent medical certificate drawn up by a physician. Once the person is accepted on the register she or he undergoes an occupational therapist assessment. This assists in identifying the jobseeker's abilities and so strengthens the LSF profiling and guidance executives' efforts in matching the client with the available vacancies.

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## Guidance for immigrants

The [Migrants Learners' Unit](#) within the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) seeks to promote the inclusion of newly arrived learners into the education system in compulsory, post-secondary and tertiary education. Each learner's well-being is valued through the provision of a holistic educational experience while focusing on the acquisition of linguistic and sociocultural competences. The unit recognises the need to value and involve all the stakeholders concerned for this educational experience to succeed.

All primary, middle and secondary state, church and independent schools provide career guidance and counselling services for all students including migrants. Career guidance is also provided at the post-secondary and tertiary institutions to all students who access this service.

Migrants who acquire refugee status have long been able to register with [Jobsplus](#) on the unemployment register. These are allocated an employment advisor and together they develop a personalised action plan for employment. The skills, competences and work experiences of the individual with a migrant background are identified together with the training needs which generally include the need for language courses. The latter are also helped with CV writing and recognition of qualifications under the Malta qualification framework. Other categories of migrants, such as those with subsidiary protection, asylum seekers and failed asylum seekers, however, were not fully being catered for with the exception of the few *ad hoc* migrants that specifically asked for this type of additional support.

[Jobsplus](#) has recently taken the decision to play an active role in the full integration of migrants in Maltese society through the facilitation of work placements and, in May of 2017, formalising the job seeking advisory services for migrants with a subsidiary protection status (SP). Employment advisors now reach out to all migrants with an SP status but not yet in employment, via an invitation to a guidance meeting. Outreach is also carried out through NGOs who work directly with migrants. [Jobsplus](#) has also launched a dedicated Job Brokerage Office (JBO) which targets very short-term placements for certain categories of migrants (refugees, subsidiary protection, temporary humanitarian protection and asylum seekers).

Following the initial piloting of these services, it was concluded that, in order to facilitate the transfer of migrants to employment and expedite their integration, a more holistic and enhanced approach was needed. In this context, [Jobsplus](#) submitted an application for EU Funds under the Asylum Migration and Integration Funds (AMIF) in relation to a new project (Supported Employment Services for Migrants). The project entails specific training (basic language training in English and Maltese for employment and training in Work Readiness and Work Ethics – Understanding Maltese Employers), and other specialised services including cultural mediators/interpreters, occupational therapists, psychologists, as well as translation of key documents and development of informative booklets aimed at targeting both individuals with a migrant background and employers.

[Jobsplus](#) is responsible for issuing employment licences to foreign nationals needing an authorisation to work in Malta. Beneficiaries of international protection are issued with a personal employment licence, which can authorise them to carry out various jobs with different employers. Employers are required to submit an engagement form. According to the Ministry for European Affairs and Equality (2017), licences are issued for a maximum period of one year, renewable. [Jobsplus](#) is in the process of issuing these permits up to the validity of the status certificate issued by the Refugee Commission, upon request by the applicant.

There are other practices/schemes which support the employability of immigrants and refugees provided by [Jobsplus](#).

[Trade testing/Validation Process](#) has been set up to assess individuals who have acquired knowledge, skills and competence in a particular occupation but do not possess a formal qualification. Through trade testing a person is assessed in a particular area by the following types of assessment: a) interview; b) portfolio c) theory test; d) practical test. Candidates who successfully pass from the trade test are awarded a Certificate of Competence in that particular occupation. In the case where assessment takes place under the validation process the certificate is issued by the National Commission for Further and Higher Education (NCFHE). The applicant must be literate as all Trade Testing/Validation Process include a written examination. Depending on the level of Trade Testing/Validation Process, arrangements may be made to individuals having literacy problems.

[Bridging the gap](#) is a scheme designed to support the client in the transition from unemployment to employment. It allows the employer to evaluate the

performance of the client in the workplace, prior to proper engagement. The employer and Jobsplus enter into an agreement regarding the work exposure period, whereby the client is placed on the scheme with the prospect of employment. Clients receive a weekly allowance of 80% of the minimum wage from Jobsplus, and they must renounce their rights to social security benefits if the work exposure period exceeds twenty-eight weeks. Employers participating in this scheme are exempted from social security contributions, wages and sick leave benefits (Jobsplus, n.d.) and the employer can benefit from the support of Jobsplus officials throughout the work exposure phase.

The main responsibility of [The Office of the Refugee Commissioner](#) is to receive, process and determine applications for international protection that are lodged in Malta, as stipulated by the [Refugees Act](#) (Chapter 420 of the Laws of Malta), amended by Act XX of 2017, and its [Subsidiary Legislation 420.07](#) on Procedural Standards in Examining Applications for International Protection Regulations. This Office is also bound by the obligations assumed by Malta under the 1951 Geneva Convention relating to the status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, as well as its obligations under European Directive 2011/95/EU, European Directive 2013/32/EU and the Dublin Regulation. The Office's fundamental objective, is to ensure a totally independent, fair, efficient and swift eligibility determination process while, at the same time, guaranteeing the best quality possible regarding the hearing, examination and determination of applications.

*The Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS) implements the national legislation and policy concerning the welfare of refugees, persons enjoying international protection and asylum seekers. In practice, AWAS manages reception facilities, provides information programmes on employment, housing, health, welfare and education, and promotes government schemes related to resettlement voluntary returns. AWAS also acts as a facilitator between public entities responsible for providing services to ensure that national obligations to beneficiaries of international protection and asylum seekers are accessible and encourages networking between relevant local voluntary organisations in Malta. It also advises the Government on new developments in its field of operations and draws up reports for policy-making bodies. Amongst other services the agency assists migrants in relation to:*

- a. identify and contact employment offices;
- b. offer support towards employability;
- c. secure language training;
- d. access other training courses.

The [Jesuit Refugee Service](#) (JRS), Malta, a non-governmental organisation, provides the JRS walk-in service provides migrants with basic initial integration support, including help to fill in their CVs. The service tries to guide each person according to their CV:

- a. if a person has Refugee Status, that person is encouraged to register with Jobsplus;
- b. if a person has other forms of protection, such as subsidiary protection, temporary humanitarian protection or temporary humanitarian protection are referred to Jobsplus after a consent form is completed;
- c. persons who are either asylum seekers or rejected asylum seekers are directed to job brokerage office at Jobsplus.

JRS supports refugees and asylum seekers in their job seeking regarding individual employers, recruitment agencies, or other online job-seeking services. JRS also runs its own projects and currently (2019) supports female migrants in engaging in studies to improve their employability.

Persons with protection who have higher education qualifications are directed and supported to utilise the [Malta Qualifications Recognition Information Centre](#) (MQRIC) process, to obtain recognition of their certificates. Individuals interested in furthering their education are offered guidance on suitable options and are frequently referred to the [Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology](#) and, more specifically, to the Skills kits programme offered by the institution.

All migrants are informed about classes in English and Maltese languages offered by the various NGOs. English and Maltese language courses for migrants are offered by many providers such as, the Integra Foundation, the Directorate for Research, Lifelong Learning and Employability and the Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers.

[UNHCR Malta](#) is not operational in terms of activities related to career guidance *per se*, but they fund projects, in collaboration with their implementing partner [Jesuit Refugee Service](#) (JRS) and other NGOs. For instance:

- a. Project integrated aims to support beneficiaries of international protection (holders of refugee status or subsidiary protection) to integrate fully and access their rights effectively in Malta. Part of this project focuses on legal and psycho-social support, including support in employment;
- b. Integration Priority Track project provides individual support to beneficiaries of international protection to facilitate their integration in Malta. Tailored support for tertiary education, skills and employability and entrepreneurship is provided;
- c. provision of an English course (which includes childcare support) for refugee women living in Gozo as other forms of language support in Gozo are less common than in Malta where several NGOs offer free language classes;
- d. provision of home visits and individual counselling support. Those interested in employment and/or training are referred to Jobsplus.

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## Coronavirus Update

In the second week of March, the Maltese government started taking various measures to avoid the spread of Covid-19; one of them was the closure of schools. To support these measures, many government entities started operating remotely by having employees work from home, which also applied to career guidance services. The Maltese guidance system has had to come up with quick adaptations in response to the sudden changes in the whole system; mainly a system that was mainly based on face-to-face contact with clients transformed into a remote system. This not only required a change in the mind-set of practitioners who had to rapidly fit into a new way of working, but also at organisational level for implementing systems that would ensure services' continuity.

The following entities, in the education and employment sectors, have taken measures and developed practices regarding career guidance provision:

1. Education sector:
  1. Compulsory education:
    - the National Schools Support Services (entity responsible for overseeing the delivery of career guidance within the state colleges), Ministry for Education and Employment
    - Secondary State Schools
  2. Post-Secondary – Academic, VET and Higher Education sectors:
    - Junior College
    - Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School
    - GEM 16+
    - The Sir M.A. Refalo Sixth Form
    - Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology
    - The Institute of Tourism Studies
    - The University of Malta
2. Employment sector:
  1. Jobsplus, Malta' Public Employment Services
  2. Other entities:
    - Euroguidance Malta
    - The Malta Career Guidance Association
    - The Malta Enterprise

### Compulsory Education

In Malta, services were reportedly quick in adapting from the previous face-to-face interactions to new forms of delivery including phone guidance, e-mails and online profile generation'. In primary, secondary and post-secondary, for the guidance service offered at educational level, the [Ministry for Education and Employment](#) has set up a helpline number whereby students and parents can speak to various practitioners. Besides personal issues, students are also provided with support concerning: curricular difficulties, study difficulties, queries related to choice of subjects, changes in

the postsecondary course requirements due to COVID-19, queries related to exams, concerns related to transition to post-secondary education, etc. This service was set up two weeks after the schools closed; it involves having calls redirected to practitioners' personal phones. Given the changes related to examinations, assessments and the affected curricula, the Ministry also published a list of frequently asked questions from students on its social media platform, which usually would be referred to guidance. Most of the schools, VET providers, further and higher education institutions are offering all services through video conferencing, in one-on-one sessions or in groups, or through email and phone.

In the short-term, one may say that a percentage of the services at school level have been suspended because the nature of the work does not permit certain activities to be carried out, such as outings and class interventions. Within the Ministry, other related online support helplines are in place that specifically cater for difficulties related to disability and inclusion and to curricular matters.

The **National School Support Services** within the Ministry for Education and Employment undertook the development of specific resources for students and/or parents/guardians. The aim is to reach out to students with the information that will help them during the different phases in their educational pathway. For instance, these resources include the development of infographics written in student-friendly language to explain the new qualifications required for post-secondary education, video outlining the skills required to succeed in today's world of work, how to sit for an online interview, etc. Recent developments have also seen the introduction of an online face-to-face career guidance service using Microsoft Teams with Year 11 students, who are at the end of compulsory education and who need support in choosing their post-secondary course/career path. Prior the pandemic, students obtained information related to educational and career guidance by participating in different events for each year group. Such events included the career/post-secondary fairs for year 11 students, interview and job seeking skills and the Career exposure experience (one-week job shadowing) during year 10; career orientation visits to different sectors during year 9; the subject choice exercise during Year 8; and Language Choice and transition to secondary education in year 6.

Furthermore, State Colleges within the Ministry for Education and Employment also provided support with their guidance services by using the school Facebook page, students' emails and/or website to send supporting messages, resources and information to students and/or parents related to career issues amongst others.

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Post-Secondary Education Sector – Academic, VET and Higher Education

At the Junior College, career guidance sessions (individual and group) mostly focus on supporting students according to their needs. Most queries will be academic related – namely information on courses offered at the **University of Malta**, career paths and opportunities, studying skills and tips on managing time more effectively. Some students are also referred to other services offered by the college. Moreover, the **Junior College** has an official FB and Instagram platform where students can stay in touch and receive useful and updated information. Queries are received via e-mails and answered in a short period of time. Students can also contact the advisory services via phone. Online video sessions/meetings are also available for students who wish to discuss in more detail their queries; however, a request for an appointment is needed. In addition, support team meetings/sessions are organised frequently through video conferencing with the Student advisory services at the University of Malta.

The **Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School** service was shifted to online support. Whilst teachers were/are encouraged to continue their support through online means of communication, all current students were informed/reminded that they could reach out to the guidance team through email. Students send their difficulties/queries, and all efforts are made so that emails are replied to in not more than 24 hours. Prospective students and their parents/guardians are also using this service, while there is also the plan to hold online information/Q&A sessions targeted at those. Furthermore, all the necessary admissions material/requirements are available online on the website.

The career guidance practitioners working in the **GEM16+** have been conducting face-to-face and one-to-one interventions. After the corona virus, the school is doing its utmost to reach out to its students through online learning on a daily basis. A good number of students reacted positively to the call of continuing their studies. Apart from the provision of support related to the academic aspect by the Senior Leadership Team, career guidance practitioners and teachers are readily available to provide students with any help they might need.

Similarly, prospective students can contact the **Sir M. A. Refalo Sixth Form** via telephone or email in order to get career guidance support related to course choice and entry requirements for the upcoming academic year.

The **Institute of Tourism Studies**, within the Ministry for Tourism, provided services mostly via face-to-face appointments and emails. In addition, there were orientation visits held at ITS addressed to secondary school students as well as post-secondary school students, careers fairs at different secondary and post-secondary schools, talks held at different secondary and post-secondary schools and interview skills group for current students or interview skills in one to one sessions. However, after the corona virus, all sessions are held on Teams (for current students), skype or telephone for all current and/or prospective students. The career guidance officer and the student support officer followed current students who were not attending lessons. Moreover, a generic email was sent to all schools around Malta to continue giving information about ITS and to remind prospective students of the career guidance services offered at ITS. Finally, office telephones have been connected to private mobiles for more accessibility.

The Outreach and Student's Affairs Department of the **Malta College of Arts, Science & Technology** (MCAST) offered also face-to-face services, which, after the pandemic, are being provided through remote systems mainly telephone call back, e-mail and Microsoft Teams. MCAST prospective learners include individuals from all age groups. Notable mentions are VET interested people, migrants, persons with disabilities, NEETS, long-term unemployed, inmates and so forth. MCAST was quick to respond to the pandemic by preparing a set of **Frequently Asked Questions** in order to clarify difficulties that current and prospective students may have.

Prior to the corona virus pandemic, the **Student advisory services** of the University of Malta included meeting clients on a one-to-one basis and also holding several group meetings with both students and career guidance practitioners. The objectives of these meetings range from providing support through information dissemination, providing career guidance and advice to prospective and current students of the University of Malta, and supporting career guidance practitioners in other institutions. In addition, the Student advisory services of the University of Malta office also coordinate the Recognition for prior learning scheme. All the services offered previously face-to-face are now being offered remotely because of the restrictions imposed by the Health Authorities. For instance, the telephone lines, which were previously answered from on-site offices, are now connected to laptops. One-to-one sessions are held remotely through Skype or Zoom, while group sessions and administrative meetings are held via Zoom. Email queries are answered and regular contact throughout the day via WhatsApp takes place.

Finally, the University of Malta has taken some measures in relation to the entry to UM in 2020 and some changes to the start date of the courses in October 2020. These updates and measures are detailed [here](#).

#### Sources

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The Public Employment Service - Jobsplus

Services for Jobseekers, employers and others who need career guidance

**Jobsplus** Malta's (Public employment services) has stopped face-to-face interaction arrangements for all advisory staff to be able to telework and all advisory sessions are now being carried out over the phone. Once jobseekers register with Jobsplus, they are allocated an employment advisor who

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contacts the jobseeker in order to generate the job search profile. Depending mainly on the needs and facilities available to the jobseeker, the initial phone call by the employment advisor focuses on requesting supplementary information such as qualifications and competencies, through e-mail and the PES's online CV builder. The information is then vetted by the advisor. All the information gathered is then used to match the profile of the jobseeker with suitable vacancies. Employment advisors are not only, however, depending on vacancies held by Jobsplus, but they are also actively searching for vacancies available through other sources. Jobsplus is already reaching out to employers that may have job opportunities related to the competencies of the current registrants.

Jobsplus has been working with the help of a service provider on the development of a new online registration system to facilitate the registration and profile generation for both jobseekers and the employment advisors. The first phase of this system has already been deployed with significant work already being carried out on a second phase which will enhance the system further. On its website, Jobsplus also included a [dedicated page to COVID-19 related issues](#) and its clients can contact the employment advisor through e-mail or by phone. The service has become very crucial in these challenging times, given the number of employees who had their work terminated.

Employment advisors at Jobsplus previously had the opportunity to refer jobseekers directly to courses, and traineeships offered in-house through their training centre. Jobsplus still offers these initiatives despite the limitations posed by social distancing. Additionally, regarding training courses, trainees are invited for online learning in two courses. Whenever possible, other initiatives such as work exposure, are still taking place though the pool of employers taking on such placements is limited. Services for unemployed persons with disabilities have been impacted as the advice given by the health authorities is for them to remain at home if they feel at higher risk of contracting COVID-19. Advisory services offered by the profiling and guidance officers of the Lino Spiteri Foundation for persons with disability are still being carried out over the phone. Job coaching is still being offered to disabled persons who decided to continue working on-site. Other forms of support are also being provided to those at home, through telephone or electronically (video call meetings). Employment advisors are still referring jobseekers with mental health difficulties and with substance abuse problems for professional support, through cooperation agreements with specialised NGOs.

#### Sources

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Jobsplus (2020). COVID-19. <https://jobsplus.gov.mt/announcement-coronavirus>

#### Other entities

In the [Euroguidance MT](#) centre, administered by the [National School Support Services \(Ministry for Education and Employment\)](#), prior to the COVID-19, communication was mostly carried out through sending out of emails and official circulars. The Euroguidance website and a Facebook page were further strengthened to provide career guidance practitioners the resources, info and support needed in their work and a closed group was set up so that practitioners have the opportunity to share concerns and/or resources that can be helpful during this critical time.

The [Malta Career Guidance Association](#), which is a voluntary organisation that represents career guidance practitioners, is extending its services to the community where its volunteers can answer any questions through e-mail, chat or online calls. The service includes guidance related to choice of subjects, career-related queries, employability skills, course information and adult participation in lifelong learning. This service was promoted on the [Association's Facebook page](#) and website and was shared by various members. In addition, the Association has updated its website and included a [dedicated area related to COVID-19](#) queries in terms of employment and education. The page consolidates information issued from various government entities such as those in education, government assistance and job searching services

In terms of financially assisting companies and businesses the Maltese government acted quite fast in issuing various grants, covering those companies who had employees in quarantine, companies who had to temporary close down due to legal notices, and others who suffered loss of business. Other schemes included deferral of taxes and social security payments, discussions with banks to install moratoriums for six months, a government mechanism to provide liquidity to employers, assistance in enhancing teleworking measures and investment in new equipment and additional social benefits to vulnerable people and parents. The schemes catered for both foreign and local workforce and offered a more flexible approach. These initiatives can be accessed through the Malta Enterprise [website](#).

#### Sources

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